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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

DECEMBER 18, 2002

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 18, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

12. TWELVE SIRNAK PKK SUSPECTS HELD

(Bolge) According to the Sirnak Security Directorate, a local court ordered twelve people arrested during a recent anti-PKK/KADEK operation to remain in custody. The suspects are accused of providing support and shelter to the terror organization, recruitment, logistical support, and communication between KADEK members in rural areas and those in provincial capitals.

13. TEN SUSPECTS ORDERED HELD IN ELAZIG DRUG CASE

(Turkiye) The Malatya State Security Court arrested ten of the 14 suspects connected with the seizure of 3.5 tons of asitanhidrite in Elazig. The operation was jointly carried out by U.S., Russian and Turkish police. Security forces determined the seized drugs belonged to the PKK/KADEK.

14. NO PERMISSION FOR RETURNS TO DIYARBAKIR VILLAGES

(Milli Gazete) Diyarbakir Governor A. Cemil Serhadli said village returns continue in the region. Serhadli added that his office had refused to grant permission for returns to 12 villages in Diyarbakir's Lice, Kulp and Dicle townships due to security reasons. He said there had not been as many returns as anticipated.

15. HUNGER STRIKE IN SUPPORT FOR OCALAN

(Evrensel) A group of Centennial University (Van) students started a one-day hunger strike in support of the "Freedom to (PKK/KADEK leader Abdullah) Ocalan" petition drive launched by Dicle (Diyarbakir) University students. Students pledged they would continue similar demonstrations until February 15. Also, a group of Bingol youths gathered at the base of a local mountain to protest the isolation of Ocalan by lighting fires and shouting pro-Ocalan slogans. Another group staged a protest demonstration on the Bingol-Karliove (Bingol) highway, closing the highway to traffic for a while.

16. HADEP MEMBERS ARRESTED

(Evrensel) Diyarbakir police arrested a total of five People's Democracy Party (HADEP) Youth Commission officials on December 16, allegedly without explanation. The arrestees were taken to the Diyarbakir Security Directorate's Anti-terror Department.

17. CUKUROVA U. SUPPORTS DICLE U. STUDENTS' PETITION DRIVE

(Evrensel) Cukurova University (C.U.) students expressed support for the "I Want My University Student Initiative" campaign launched by Dicle (Diyarbakir) University students. A group of 50 C.U. students staged a march on the campus, carrying pro-mother tongue and Kurdish-language education banners and shouting slogans in favor of democratic and free universities.

HOLTZ